Foreign shareholdings in news channels

2318. SHRI A. VIJAYARAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the rules restrict foreign share holding to 26 per cent in the news channels uplinking from India;

(b) whether there is any broadcast regulatory frame work prescribed by law;

(c) if so, the detials thereof;

(d) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(e) whether the competent authority is making *ad hoc* decisions on foreign media house, which is not following the foreign investment norms and rules?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) No, Sir. However as and when circumstances have so necessitated, this ministry has prescribed guidelines regulating the broadcasting sector, including that of uplinking of channels from India, cable network, etc.

(d) Since the broadcasting scenario is continuously undergoing change, the changes are reflected in the policies, as and when they occur. These policies would take some time to stablize during which period, a decision is also expected to be taken on the Communication Convergence Bill. It would be appropriate to consider formulating a policy and prescribing a regulatory framework integrating these individual initiatives thereafter.

(e) It is the constant endeavour of the competent authority to ensure that permission to companies to uplink are given after ensuring compliance of all eligibility criteria including foreign investment norms.